



Patrick Tigie Confirmed as OHIC's New Commissioner

Following the retirement of Commissioner Marie Ganim, Patrick Tigie has joined the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) this month serving as the agency's new commissioner. In December of last year, after being nominated by Governor Gina Raimondo, Tigie was unanimously approved by the Rhode Island state senate Health and Human Services committee and approved by the full senate afterward.

Commissioner Tigie joins OHIC after an accomplished career of health care leadership in Rhode Island and a proven track record of expanding access to care and driving value in the health care system through delivery system reform and payment reform. Prior to joining OHIC, Commissioner Tigie served as the assistant secretary for health and Medicaid director for RI's Executive Office of Health and Human Services where he led the state's Medicaid program, which under his leadership served approximately 300,000 residents and had an annual budget of approximately \$2.5 billion. As a distinguished executive with experience in leading and managing critical efforts to achieve strategic health policy goals on a statewide scale, Tigie will utilize his skills to continue to improve access and affordability of health insurance in our state.

Commissioner Tigie plans to accelerate and expand upon the ongoing successes OHIC has achieved in expanding access, parity, and affordability of health care in our state. In particular, Commissioner Tigie has laid out six items in which he will be focused on as he begins his tenure as commissioner:

- ▶ Continuing to ensure that Rhode Islanders receive adequate coverage for COVID-19 testing, treatment, and care.
- ▶ Leveraging the regulatory structure within OHIC to accelerate delivery system reform.
- ▶ Continued implementation of the Affordability Standards.
- ▶ Continuing to increase behavioral health care access and ensure parity between behavioral and physical health care services.
- ▶ Advancing the statewide expansion of telehealth services.
- ▶ Continuing on the success of the RI Cost Trends Project.

OHIC Applying for State Flexibility Grant to Improve Consumer Protections

In an effort to enhance and support the role of state regulators in the implementation and planning of consumer protections provided under the Affordable Care Act, a federal grant entitled "The State Flexibility to Stabilize the Market Grant Program Cycle II" was established at the end of 2020. The grant seeks proposals for innovative measures from each state to ensure that regulators are implementing and enforcing guaranteed availability and renewability of coverage, and non-discrimination of coverage.

OHIC participated in the first cycle of this grant and hopes to use this grant opportunity to significantly improve consumer protection market reforms in our state and build off of the recent accomplishments completed in 2020. For this grant OHIC is proposing three projects. The first is to redesign our website to ensure it is consumer-centered, easy to navigate, and is both educational and accessible. Second, the office plans to enhance the utilization review data portal to better identify discriminatory practices. Third, the office aims to hire a staff person and expert consultant assistance to support the office in improving access to behavioral health care services and ensuring behavioral health parity. Applications for this grant are being sent out in early February with funding notifications being sent out in April of this year.

Behavioral Health and Substance Use Resource Guide

The Mental Health Association of Rhode Island created a behavioral health and substance use resource guide that includes crisis hotlines, referral networks, peer recovery lines, and support groups. View the English and Spanish version here: <https://mhari.org/resources/>



OHIC Fiscal Year 2022 Core Goals

- ▶ Goal 1: Advance delivery system and payment reform and promote the development of a continuum of care for behavioral health.
- ▶ Goal 2: Address cost drivers by institutionalizing the cost trend target work, including translating analytics into policies that positively impact consumers, providers, and the system as a whole.
- ▶ Goal 3: Increase consumer protection in the commercial market by improving and strengthening oversight.
- ▶ Goal 4: Ensure that health insurers and review agents comply with RI and US law by establishing and executing on regular and targeted reviews.
- ▶ Goal 5: Protect coverage gains in Rhode Island by balancing affordability with insurer solvency in the rate review process and support individual market initiatives and protecting small groups.
- ▶ Goal 6: Pro-actively ensure comprehensive health insurer responses to the public health emergency, including continuing expanded access to Telemedicine, testing and care.

For further information about each of these goals, [click here](#).

Join Us on February 16 for our Next Health Insurance Advisory Council Meeting

In an effort to keep the public and its members safe, the Health Insurance Advisory council (HIAC) has transitioned to virtual meetings in lieu of in-person meetings. The next HIAC meeting will take place via Zoom on **Tuesday, February 16 at 4:30pm**. To attend the meeting, click on this link on February 16: <https://zoom.us/j/92093100426>

To stay up to date on RI health insurance news and get updates on HIAC meetings, sign up for our mailing list so that you will receive OHIC newsletters and meeting notices. To sign up, email Cory King (cory.king@ohic.ri.gov)

Are You Having Trouble With Health Insurance Claims Or Denials?

Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) offers free support to any Rhode Islander with any kind of insurance who needs assistance with health care or health insurance. The RIPIN call center works with consumers from start to finish, ensuring that all of your issues are resolved. If you are looking to better understand your insurance benefits, trying to dispute a coverage denial, file an appeal, or any other insurance issue, call the RIPIN call center.



From 2018 - 2020, RIPIN saved Rhode Islanders

 **\$3.9 million**

Contact the Call Center:
1-855-747-3224